

Amendments to the Specification:

Please replace the paragraph beginning at page 12, line 1, with the following amended paragraph:

Node B sends [SF,2,2] to node ~~B~~ C to report its own bridging action. Node C responds by selecting to receive the protected paths via link 6. For each bridging and selection operation, nodes B and C take action for all protected traffic affected by the failure and leave any unprotected traffic alone based on the previously configured protection status. The rerouting of numerous protected paths can be accomplished in this way with minimal signaling while preserving granularity in configuring protection. It will also be noted that the signaling is not flooded throughout the mesh network but rather flows only through the nodes of the protection path. The protection scheme, in contrast to ring-based schemes, does not rely upon knowledge of every path being distributed throughout the network.